

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05 FDRE-00

ITF-05 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3641
INFO DIA WASHDC
US MISSION GENEVA 525

UNCLAS BANGKOK 7855

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, TH, US

SUBJ: CHATCHAI ON REFUGEES IN THAILAND

FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE
MAY 1. FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF HIS
REMARKS ON REFUGEES IN THAILAND.

BEGIN TEXT.

CHATCHAI: IN ANY CASE WE GLADLY WELCOME THE NEWS THAT THERE
IS A CEASEFIRE IN VIETNAM ALREADY, ESPECIALLY SINCE THIS
CEASEFIRE MEANS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO MORE REFUGEES FLEEING
INTO THAILAND WE REFUSE TO ALLOW ANY HIGH LEVEL SOUTH VIET-
NAMESE POLITICIANS TO BE GIVEN ASYLUM IN THAILAND, IN ORDER
TO PREVENT ANY POSSIBLE OBSTACLES IN CONTACTS TO BE MADE WITH
THE NEW VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE. IN REGARD TO ORDI-
NARY REFUGEES, THEY WILL BE SENT BACK TO VIETNAM.

REPORTER: WHAT IS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES AT PRESENT?

CHATCHAI: THE NUMBER OF ORDINARY VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IS NOT
VERY LARGE, BECAUSE MOST OF THEM ARE ONLY PASSING THROUGH THAILAND.
NOT MORE THAN 2,000 WHO CAME HERE BY PLANE ARE STILL HERE NOW.

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WE ARE USING THE SAME REGULATION WHICH WE HAVE PUT IN FORCE

ALREADY. REFUGEES WHO CAME HERE ON THEIR OWN MUST LEAVE OUR COUNTRY AFTER THE 7-DAY LIMIT IS REACHED. THE UNITED STATES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REFUGEES IT HAS BROUGHT HERE AND WHOM WE ALLOW TO REMAIN IN OUR COUNTRY FOR 30 DAYS, NOT BECAUSE THEY ENJOY ANY SPECIAL PRIVILEGE OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THEY ARE ALLOWED TO REMAIN HERE FOR ONE MONTH BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES GUARANTEES THAT THEY WILL BE TAKEN OUT OF THAILAND, THEREFORE IT MUST BE GIVEN TIME TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR TRANSPORTATION TO THE UNITED STATES.

REPORTER: REFUGEES BROUGHT HERE BY FRANCE...

CHATCHAI: NO FRENCH REFUGEES HAVE ARRIVED HERE YET. I HAVE HEARD THAT THERE IS SOME OBSTACLE. THIS, HOWEVER, IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, WHICH HAS SENT ITS OFFICIALS TO WORK IN THAILAND. IT HAS GIVEN CONSIDERABLE AID ALREADY.

REPORTER: COULD YOU CITE SOME EXAMPLES?

CHATCHAI: SUCH AS TAKING OVER VARIOUS REFUGEES, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DR. ULBRICHT. YOU WILL MOST PROBABLY HAVE HEARD HIS NAME. HE WAS FORMERLY IN GENEVA.

REPORTER: SUPPOSE ORDINARY REFUGEES REFUSE TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY, WHAT WILL WE DO?

CHATCHAI: THEY MUST BE COMPELLED TO LEAVE OUR COUNTRY.

REPORTER: BUT SHOULD THEY REFUSE TO GO, THEN WHAT COULD WE DO?

CHATCHAI: WE WOULD SEND THEM BACK, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW. ALL ACTION MUST BE TAKEN STRICTLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW.

REPORTER: WOULD THEY BE SENT BACK TO VIETNAM?

CHATCHAI: YES.

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REPORTER: BUT SUPPOSE THEY ARE AFRAID AND DO NOT DARE...

CHATCHAI: THEN THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE THE COUNTRY FOR THEM TO BE SENT TO. BUT THAILAND WILL NOT ACCEPT REFUGEES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, BECAUSE WE ARE ALREADY FACED WITH A SERIOUS PROBLEM CAUSED BY REFUGEES, A PROBLEM WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO REMEDY YET. SO HOW CAN WE BE EXPECTED TO ACCEPT MORE REFUGEES? IT'S UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE. THEREFORE, ALL

REFUGEES MUST LEAVE OUR COUNTRY. THEY CAN CHOOSE WHAT OTHER
COUNTRY THEY WILL GO TO, OR WHETHER THEY WILL RETURN TO VIETNAM.
MASTERS

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